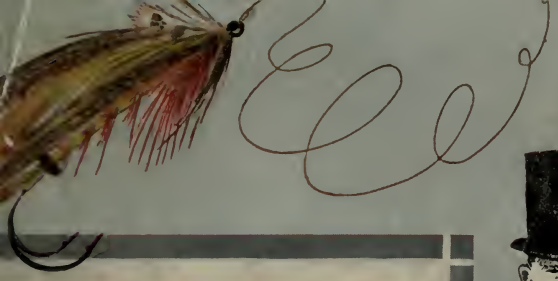




BERKELEY

LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA



PETER TAMSON

Elder o' the Kirk
and
Sportsman
By
J. L. DICKIE

COUNTRY LIFE LIBRARY



Q/B

No 324

2/6

Cal

EX
libris



Don Horter

PETER TAMSON



PETER TAMSON

*ELDER O' THE KIRK AND
SPORTSMAN*

BY
J. L. DICKIE

LONDON :

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICES OF "COUNTRY LIFE,"
20 TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C., AND BY
GEORGE NEWNES, LTD., 8-11 SOUTHAMPTON STREET,
STRAND, W.C. NEW YORK : CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

961
D5515
pat

NOTE

IN publishing this little book, which I hope may while away a weary hour in these days of gloom and depression, I must express my grateful thanks to the Editor of *Country Life*, in which all the stories save one have appeared, and also to the Editor of the *Scottish Field*, in whose pages the other story first was published.

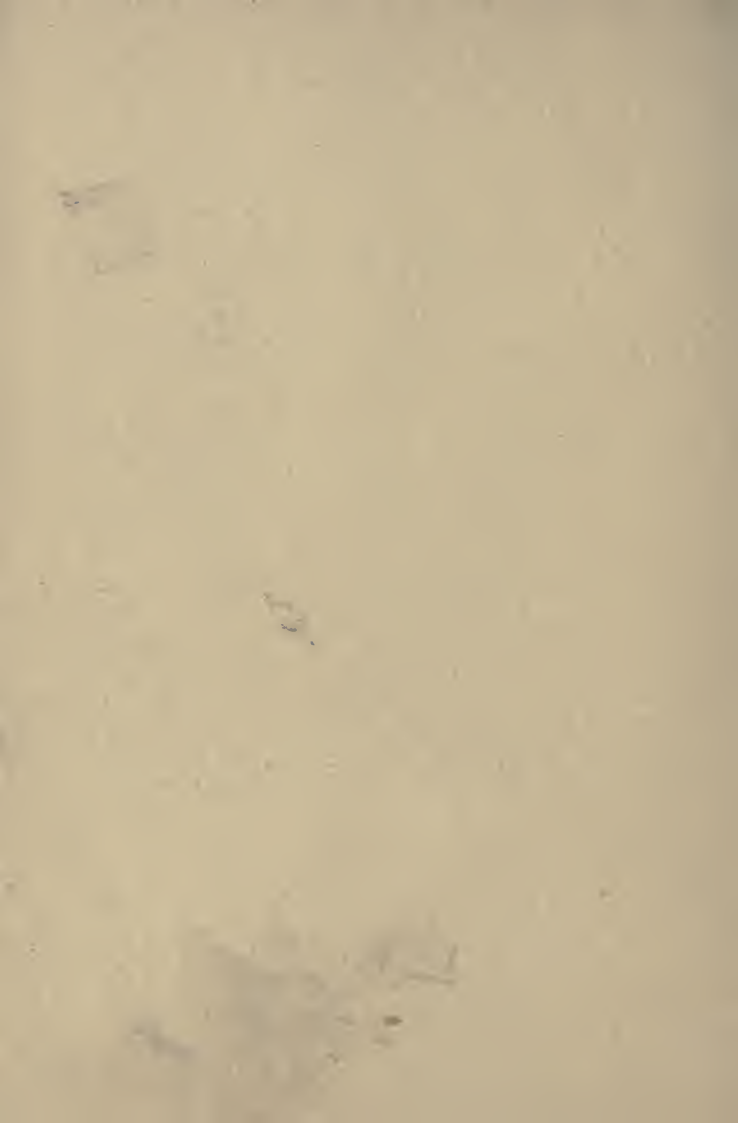
J. L.^s DICKIE.

August, 1915.

M839039

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I THE MUCKLE TROUT OF GLENGOLLACH .	1
II TEMPTATION	9
III THE ELDER AND THE DRY FLY . .	22
IV A LESSON IN POLITENESS . . .	31
V THE ELDER'S BAIRN	43
VI THE ELDER'S PRODIGAL . . .	56
VII THE ELDER'S PAYING GUEST . .	71
VIII A GOOD DAY'S FISHING . . .	87
IX THE ELDER AND THE BAGMEN . .	96
X PETER TAMSON, SOLDIER OF THE KING.	110



PETER TAMSON

I

THE MUCKLE TROUT OF GLENGOLLACH

IN the far north of "Caledonia stern and wild" is a little village called Glengollach, and near it brawls the Quaich, a grand little salmon river celebrated both for the numbers and size of its fish. Glengollach is a peaceful hamlet given over to the industry of "wyving," and no sportsman, from the millionaire rubber magnate to the Cockney clerk who plies humbly his "angle" at the Welsh Harp of Hendon fame, considers his outfit complete without a pair of the "braw stripit" topped stockings for which Glengollach is justly famous.

Most of the inhabitants spent their spare time playing "gowff" on a rough

nine-hole hillside course, but one or two of them were desperately keen fishermen. Of the latter, perhaps Peter Tamson and the Reverend John McGollach were the most notable.

Peter Tamson was the Selfridge of Glengollach, and the windows "but and ben" of his little cottage shop were an education in themselves if he who ran could read.

Cheek by jowl with effigies in sodden gingerbread of "gowffin Balfour" and Maister Asquith, lay Robbie Burns' poems, large-print Bibles, impossible floral ties, and home-cured bacon.

Peter was a man of (so "they said") many bawbees carefully hoarded, and a greedy, ferret-like temperament which ill accorded with the Uriah Heep-like sleekiness which appeared on the surface; and his one mania, after "gatherin' bawbees," was — fishing. He had a standing permit from "the Great House" to ply his "wand" when and where he pleased. Once, while daundering down the riverside with a full basket,

he sat down to rest, and espied in the clear water beneath his feet a "muckle" trout. Peter soliloquised in rapture—

"Aye, but he's a bonny ted; sax pun' if he's an ounce."

It was a glorious afternoon in June, and Peter's lust for trout was satisfied by the full basket of speckled beauties which lay by his side on the bank.

He crawled to the edge of the stream, and, hidden by an overhanging bush, lay in rapture and watched the monster fish.

How graceful he was! Peter was an ardent admirer of the beautiful in nature.) Now, with a lightning flash of his tail, he soared upwards to pouch a fat fly on the surface; now he sank with aldermanic complacency to his lair in the reed bed, his fins moving just enough to keep his ground. He *was* a beauty.

Peter crawled back to his rod and basket, took out and loaded a capacious clay pipe, and began to puff fiercely. His hand stole, itching, to his rod, and then guiltily fell back.

“What for no?” he murmured to himself. “If I dinna catch him, another wull; an’ yet it’s a mighty shame, he’s sic a bonny brute. Wull I tak’ him—wull I? *No*; I winna,” he roared, and rising hastily he sped homewards.

From that day on, Peter’s character changed. He became dour and sulky, irritable and morose, and might be seen any evening lying on the bank by the Blue Rock, gazing down on the lovely creature as he lay in his weed bed. He was obsessed—he was dying to add the trophy to his record, but the exquisite beauty of it held his hand.

The minister, a rival of Peter in matters piscatorial, was alarmed at the change in his parishioner’s character, and called—

“Aye, Peter, it’s gey an’ warm to-day.”

“Aye,” said Peter, lack-lustrely.

“Ye’re no verra weel, Peter, I doot.”

“I’m fine—*fine*, I’m tellin’ ye.”

“Now, now, Peter; ye needna rebuff yer auld friend. Ye’re dour and heavy now-a-days; ye’ve no’ been to kirk these twa Sindays. I doot the de’il’s on yer

track, laddie; but we'll cast him oot, we'll cast him oot "

"Weel, minister, confession's good for the soul. But if I confess ye maun sweer no to tak' advantage o' me."

"Surely, Peter; surely, man."

Peter drew his chair nearer to the minister.

"Twa month ago I was restin' on the bank by the Blue Rock Pool, an', man, I saw—afore heaven I saw the very mucklest trout that ever swam in Quaich."

"Good behere!" The minister's ferret-like little eyes flashed fishy lust.

"Aye; that bonnie an' spottit, sic a shoulder on him, an' a tail like a wee whale, and he's that lovely and graund, I just hinna the heart to 'rug' him out o' the water, and yet I want to, an' it's near drivin' me crazy."

"Tak' care, Peter, dinna let it get ower you; for what's the life o' a trout, be he never sae muckle, compared wi' a man's peace o' mind?"

"I canna tak' him, I canna," groaned Peter.

“Noo, Peter, it’s maybe a pity, but just to ease your mind, I think I have a graun’ wee black spider flee he couldna resist, an’ sooner than see ye in the loon-atick asylum, I’ll tak’ him mysel’.”

Peter was up in a raving fury.

“I micht have kent. But by heavens, minister, if you *touch* him, it’s no to the loon-atick I’ll be goin’, but to the Coort o’ Session for—*murder* ! ”

The minister fairly jumped.

“I’ll no touch him, Peter, for I’ve promised; but I thocht it would relieve yer mind.”

“Ye’ll no do it ? ”

“No; good-bye, Peter.”

But Peter often thereafter saw the patched seat of his reverence’s breeks in the air, as the latter lay by that bush, watching his (Peter’s) trout; and more than once when he lay longer than usual, Peter gripped his old 12-bore and opened the breech grimly.

As Peter had degenerated, so had the minister. He grew thin and haggard. The congregation openly complained that

his sermons were less "gutsy" than of yore, and it was bad for Glengollach.

Things had reached a pitch when Peter ceased altogether to go to church; and the minister and he passed in silence when they met, and glowered fiercely at each other.

In August one day the butler from the Great House paused at Peter's for an ounce of shag, and at the same time the minister called for a new clay pipe.

"Fine morning, Mr. Peter," said the butler.

"Aye."

"Been fishing lately? Sir Harrison Dipps got a grand trout yesterday—6½lb.—a perfect beauty; it's going to London to-day."

Peter and the minister in chorus—

"Where did he get him?"

"Oh, near the Blue Rock."

"By heavens!" murmured Peter, and the tears trickled down his weather-beaten face.

The perspiration stood in great beads on the minister's forehead, and they gazed forlornly at each other.

The butler was gone, and Peter held out his hand to the minister, and drew him into the little kitchen, where with shaking hand he poured out two very large glasses of whisky.

Trembling they raised their glasses to their lips as they murmured—

“To the memory o’ the graundest trout that ever swam in Quaich !”

II

TEMPTATION

PETER TAMSON could cast a fine fly, and I never saw a better man at throwing a minnow, with what seemed endless coils of line round fingers, some between his teeth and a few yards hanging loose. He was a past master. The Reverend McGollach—or simply “auld Gollach” as he was called behind his back—was equally good with the fly, and, moreover, could busk a decent one, which Peter could not; but the minnow fairly got “ower him,” for his line snarled up into a dozen knots at nearly every cast; and led not infrequently to unclerical language.

The Reverend John was a stout little man with red hair and eyes of greenish hue, which gave him a hungry panther

look. This "look" served him in stead, and even the most brazen in his small congregation daren't "tak' the sneeshin'" with that eye upon him. He was a good theologian, a magnificent wrestler with "auld Horny" in his lengthy prayers from the pulpit—rumour says that on one occasion he prayed without halt for twenty-five minutes, and that when he finished Davie Rait, the keeper, whispered to his wife: "I'll warrant the de'il's sweatin' after sic a trouncin'." His one fault was jealousy, and as he had but two passions in his life, fishing and gardening, the former in particular became an obsession with him, and he simply loathed to hear of another getting a heavier fish or bigger basket.

Peter was equally jealous, and the two were sworn enemies at the water-side—only; for leave fishing alone and they were excellent friends. Anyone knowing them well could easily tell this, for they were terribly polite to each other when they met on the river bank.

Along the glebeland belonging to the

manse, the Quaich jingled noisily for a good half-mile and contained two very good salmon pools, the Kailpot and the Kelpie they were named. The Kailpot was just under the manse windows, and his reverence had on being "eleckit" parish minister of Glengollach taken the back room overlooking the pool for his study. Many a time and oft, as he sat there composing his weekly "dressing down" for the sinners of Glengollach, had he jumped to his feet with a "Guid sakes, *what* a fish!" as some monster *Salmo salar* had risen with a gargantuan splash a few feet from the open window. He loved every ripple of that lovely little river; every tree, stone, fence by its side had for the Reverend John a history and a memory. There by the muckle oak at the end of his garden he had years ago run for three hours—and lost—the biggest salmon he had ever hooked; by the blue stone with that tempting swirl at its back he yearly killed the first grilse at Glengollach. It was a grand, mild October day, the sun shone in at the open window and

the gentle westerly breeze ruffled the leaves of the now reddened Virginia creeper in a sleepy dirge. The minister was in his easy-chair with a bandana handkerchief laid across his face, as he slept stertorously after his morning sermon. It was unnaturally hot for the time of the year, and after a good dinner of broth, mountain mutton, a dish of rhubarb and thick cream, he had drunk his "fly" cup and settled to a well-earned rest.

But his slumber was of short duration, for a skelping splash in the pool outside made him start up, and as he sprang from his chair and ran to the window he was just in time to see an enormous tail disappear in the depths. "My certie, what a tail! I'll warrant he's a bigger than that one I lost at the oak tree years ago, and he was five and forty pounds if an ounce."

Putting on an old wideawake hat and adjusting his carpet slippers (a present from an elderly spinster in his flock—he was a bachelor), he scrambled out of the window, carrying in his hand an old opera glass which had been his mother's. He

walked down by the edge of the water. Drawing a well-blackened "clay" from his trouser pocket, he proceeded to fill it with twist tobacco, and having carefully replaced the "dottle" he struck a match and held it over the bowl; he kept his eye on the spot where the monster rose, and a severely burnt finger resulted. His pious "damn" had scarcely ceased echoing when up came the brute again head and tail.

"A rising fish, and this the Sawbath! Eh, it's sore temptation; but I'll no fall," and rising he turned resolutely back to the house. His feelings during the next half-hour any keen fisherman can better sum up than I can describe.

At three o'clock Mary Fowler, his house-keeper, came in with his tea, and though much upset, he did ample justice to the sweet buttered scones, bannocks and home-made blæberry jam. Just before leaving the room Mary turned round: "I was washing up the dishes, sir, a while ago, and oot o' the kitchen window I saw the biggest salmon I ever saw i' my life."

“ Mary,” roared the Reverend John, now exasperated beyond endurance, “ ye ha’ been with me ten years, and ye ken fishin’s the breath o’ life to me, and ye stan’ there temptin’ me like the de’il himsel’—away wi’ ye.”

Mary, wroth at this onslaught upon her, gave him a parting shot as she banged the study door: “ It’s some like Satan reprovin’ sin I doot, for wha did I see glowerin’ at that same fish half-an-hour syne? An’ I’m no sure I didna hear a ‘damn’ float down the wind!” Poor John, that unfortunate “damn” was meant for the burnt fingers, not because it was the Sabbath when he daren’t fish.

But worse was to follow. At half-past three Peter Tamson came, as he always did, to talk to the minister about the evening service. “ Good evenin’, Maister McGollach, ye’re no lookin’ verra weel. What’s——”

“ I’m all richt, Peter, but I was havin’ a wee sleep and I’m drowsy kind.” But Peter knew better; those flaming green eyes had been occupied by other business

than slumber. Peter seemed uneasy, too, the minister thought. He was right, for after they had lit their pipes there was a silence which could be felt. The minister looked hard at Peter, and Peter glared back as he commenced : " I'm no just the thing mysel', and I think I'll bide at hame an' no' gang tae the Kirk—maybe a peel wad do me good."

In a second—for McGollach was no fool—it flashed on the pastor that there was more here than appeared on the surface. " Aye, that's queer, Peter. Ye're lookin' verra weel too. What's yer symptoms? "

" Oh, I, just giddy like, and a queer feelin' i' the small o' my back—some shivery too."

" Dearie me, that's bad," and McGollach rang the bell.

" Mary, just you rin ower and tell Dr. Havers to come here at once."

" Oh, now, minister," said Peter, who had the grace to blush, " I'm not *that* bad."

" Ye are. Ye're sickening for something and Havers *must* see you."

In a few minutes old Dr. Havers entered.

“ Well, McGollach—well, Peter—what’s the matter? ”

“ Peter’s not feeling at all weel—” and here the minister winked hard at the doctor—“ and if I were you I’d give him a black draught and send him to bed with a mustard poultice on the sma’ o’ the back—that’s where the pain is, isn’t it, Peter? ”

“ ’M, yes,” muttered Peter, sheepishly.

“ Come away wi’ me now, Peter,” said Dr. Havers, “ an’ I’ll give yer wife my directions.”

Peter disposed of, the minister wended his way to the church, where, to the congregation’s entire astonishment, he preached a splendid extempore sermon on “ Temptation.”

He came home, and, after supper, rang the bell for Mary. “ Mary! I’m sorry I spoke roughly to you in the afternoon, but I was ‘ put out ’; wake me the very minute it is daylight, and here’s half-a-crown for your vigil, for ye’ll no go to bed and ye’ll no sleep till ye wauken me.”

“Thank ye, sir, but what about the elder?” (Peter)

“He’s no weel, and he’s in bed this minute wi’ a mustard poultice on the small of his back,” chuckled McGollach.

Mary laughed heartily. “Well, his illness was sudden, for I saw him keekin’ thro’ the bushes on the other side of the water when ye were looking for that fish.”

The minister now roared with laughter. “I was right; I’ve mistaken my vocation, Mary, for I diagnosed salmonitis the moment I saw him enter here.”

At streak o’ day Mary wakened his reverence, and, wrapping well up, he took the heavy twenty-foot Greenheart rod and went down to the pool. It was a soft, grey morning, with a westerly wind, and the lights of day, all bronze and gold, were keeking through the eastmost sky. Not a sound to be heard save the river, and the occasional hoarse chuckle of an old cock grouse in the moor above. Putting on a new cast with a three-inch “Mar Lodge” fly at the end of it, the minister made his first cast.

Meanwhile, how fared it with Peter? He went to bed furious, after a large black draught and a huge mustard poultice on his back, both administered by his wife, a strapping termagant who "wore the breeches" in the Tamson household. The crowning indignity was when she took his clothes away, and, saying "Good-night, Peter," locked the door on the outside. Peter lay and thought of that glorious fish until he could bear it no longer, and feeling sure his wife had by this time gone to bed, he tore off the offending poultice and flung it under the bed. At dawn he rose cautiously and proceeded to search for some sort of clothing. All he could find was a petticoat and a jacket of his wife's, and these he donned for lack of better. Letting himself out of the window he carefully "shinned" down the water-pipe and descended to the ground. Hurrying to the outhouse he seized his rod and flybook and rushed down the road to the river. Mr. McGollach had scarcely made a dozen casts when he saw he had forgotten his gaff, and hastily repaired to the manse

to get it. When he returned a most astonishing picture met his gaze. There was Peter on the other side, standing on a slippery rock, clad in a bright tartan petticoat and a black-and-white striped woollen jacket, barefooted and with nothing on his head. He was fishing with a fly, and in his rage throwing a perfectly tremendous line.

“Good heavens, man! Awa’ hame to yer bed. You’ll get your death o’ cold standing there half naked.”

“It’s to you I’ll thank my cold and my nakedness,” roared Peter; “I didna think it o’ ye, minister, but it’ll be a fine tale for the village, aye, and the Presbytery forby.”

“Ye’re a silly fool an’ must go your ain gait,” said Mr. McGollach.

“Weel, it’s a fair fecht, and we’ll see wha kills the fish,” shouted Peter grimly.

Nervousness made McGollach catch his line in the tree behind him, and each time he did so Peter laughed hilariously. But presently, when the minister’s line tight-

ened with a jerk, and his reel began to skirl, Peter shouted, "Ye've got him, ye devil; haud tight, and I'll come ower and gaff him."

Yes, it was the monster, and in an hour's time the sweating parson managed to get within reach of the stone on which Peter was standing. But, alas! the stone was slippery, and in a flash Peter was in the roaring torrent.

"Haud him hard. I'll be out in a wink," shouted Peter, as he swam, gaff in hand, to the edge and climbed out, looking like a half-drowned terrier. Next time he succeeded, and swung the mighty fish ashore. A knock on the head, and between them they bore it in triumph to the manse kitchen. Here Mary weighed it, and the scale turned at forty-six pounds.

Peter was soon stripped, dried and dressed in a suit of the minister's, and the two foregathered over a strong glass of toddy and a pipe. "Man, Peter, ye're a sportsman, for if ye'd hooked it I felt tempted to come over and offer to gaff it

and miss it on purpose. You're the better man, Peter."

"I ken ye better than that, minister; ye'd hae done naething o' the kind; but there's nae doot it was to us baith a *sair temptation*."

III

THE ELDER AND THE DRY FLY

PETER TAMSON had now been a widower for five years. He was a well-set-up man of forty, and was reputed to be warm financially. This last was not true, as he'd lost nearly all his little capital in a wild-cat scheme to extract gold from seawater; still, the reputation remained, and that was something. The Rev. John McGollach, Minister of the Parish, had frequently advised Peter to marry again, as he was childless and lonely, and Peter had gone the length of getting engaged to Janet Birse, a bonny, upstanding girl of six-and-twenty, but with no tocher. It was the tocher, or dowry, which stuck in Peter's gizzard, for he had a keen eye to the main chance, and thought every woman ought to bring her "plenishing" to the man she married.

As all knew, Peter's real bride was his little ten-foot Greenheart rod, trusty weapon of years, with which he killed great baskets of speckled trout which wrung the Southron summer visitor's heart; for he, with all his fine gear, could not put up a show like Peter at the end of a long day's fishing. But one day came a wily Southron who opened Peter's eyes and made his heart loup with jealousy.

It was mid-August, and the Quaich was dead low and as clear as gin. Peter was having his usual Wednesday afternoon "at the watter," as it was half-holiday and the shop was shut. The sky was steel blue, and a brazen sun poured down on the Elder as he flogged his favourite pools. At five he sat down and confessed himself beaten; not a trout had he got. But his heart lightened as he saw an Englishman (you can always tell them in the glen, for glenfolks are stamped "glen") coming wearily, as he thought, down the river. He lit his blackened clay and sat waiting with joy the baiting of the Sassenach.

“Aye,” quoth Peter, “it’s some dry and bricht the day for the trouts.”

“Not an ideal day, is it? Can you tell me where Lord Peat’s water ends?”

“Ye’re at the boondary noo,” said the Elder, and added, not without a touch of sarcasm: “A s’pose ye’ll no have done much the day?”

“I’ve got a few, a fair take under the conditions of sky and water.”

“What!” shouted Peter, who could not bear the idea of being bested in his native stream. “They’ll no be many an’ they’ll no be big than, I’m thinkin’, sir!”

“Oh, not really so bad, you know.”

“Micht I juist have a look at them?” said the “doubting” Thomas.

“Oh, with pleasure,” and the Englishman took off his dainty reel and produced a fat linen pocket, from the depths of which he unrolled ten of the bonniest trout Peter had ever seen.

“Guid preserve ’s—a bonny, bonny basket! That biggest’s about two and a hauf poonds, and this yin’s about—but hoo on earth did you catch them? It

fair beats me. There's no man in Glen-gollach can touch me, me Peter Tamson, at fishin', an' you're a bit Southron body, and doon ye come and mak' a basket I'd be prood o' myself."

The Englishman smiled and made allowance for the injured pride of the Elder. "Well, you see you're fishing wet fly and I'm fishing dry, which makes all the difference. If you'd fished 'dry,' you'd probably have beaten me hollow."

"'Mphm, bit what's a 'dry' fly? I never heard tell o' that." (Test and Itchen were myths to Peter.)

"Well, you want a special rod and special flies to start with, and you watch a fish rise and put it over him, and you mustn't strike so quickly as in fishing wet."

"Ay, well noo, wad ye do me the kindness to jceest explain it aal, an' I'll try it myself?"

"Oh, with pleasure." The Sassenach initiated Peter into all the mysteries of the dry fly and let him try his 'prentice hand.

After a little he got into the style of it, for he was really a grand fisherman, and quick in the "uptak" where fish were concerned.

He got three good fish, and then asked the stranger to tell him how to set about getting a complete outfit for the fray.

"It comes till a terrible tottal," murmured the Elder, as he added up the items one by one with a stubby inch of pencil in a dirty notebook. "Noo, jeest let's see: there's the bit rod, five poonds, it's an awful like price for a wand, tho' it's a bonny ted and lichtsome in the hand; the pirn to haud the line, twa poonds ten, a terrible lot o' siller for a wee wheelie like that; an' the line thirty shillings, a puckle flees wan poond, castin' lines ten shillings, landin' net" (Peter never used one, and lost many a trout thereby) "twenty-five shillings; I'll stick to my ain creel. Your bawskit's gey an' genteel, but mine hauds jeest as muckle an' at less money. Noo, lat's see, what's the tottal? Guid sakes, man, it's eleven poonds ten, a year's rent or a hooseful o'

furnityer. I'll need to think it ower; it's a de'il o' a lot o' money!"

The Sassenach smiled, and, proffering a cigar, bade him "good afternoon" and went his way back to Lord Peat's water.

Peter lit the cigar, took a pull at an ancient flask which he had in his breast pocket, wiped the sweat from his troubled brow and thought aloud—

"Wi' that new gear I'd fairly beat auld Gollach" (the disrespectful sobriquet by which the Rev. John McGollach went in the glen). "I'd like to tak' him doon a peg; but then there's Janet. I was juist reckonin' twal poonds wad see me mairrit and get the two three noo sticks o' furnityer, so, as Willie Shakespeare wad say: 'Tae marry, or no tae marry, that is the question.' Janet's a fine wumman, but, aye, yon's a bonny rod." The Elder's greedy eyes glistened as he thought of it. "But I'll awa hame an' have me supper," and he rose and strode down the glen to his cottage.

Pinned to the door was a note from

the minister, asking him to come and see him that evening.

After a good plateful of porridge and new milk, followed by a cup of Birse tea (tea with a glass of whisky in it), he walked to the manse.

"Come in, Peter," said Mary, the minister's housekeeper, and showed the Elder into the study, where the Reverend was puffing vigorously at a very black cutty pipe.

"Aye, Peter, hoo are ye?"

"Fine, thank ye, meenister; hoo's yersel'?"

"Oh, brawly, Peter; but I'm some disturbit aboot you an' Janet. Her faither's been here and insists on the merrage takin' place at once, for he says you've dandered wi' Janet's affections ower lang."

"Oho," said Peter, bristling, "that's the kind o' crater he is, is it? Weel, that decides me, for I've been cogitatin' a' afternoon aboot it, one meenute for aye, an' anither for no, and sae ye may tell him *no* it is. Guid nicht." And Peter

was gone from the manse like a rocket, and quickly in his cottage, barred and bolted.

Presently, to his surprise, there came a knock at the door.

“Wha’s there?”

“Me, Peter. I want tae speak to ye, man.”

Peter recognised Janet’s silver tones, and opened to let her in. “Weel, Janet, is anything wrang?”

“Aye, Peter, everything’s wrang. It’s a good while since we plighted troth, and my feyther’s determined for me to mak’ a breach o’ promise case o’ ye, an’——”

“Did he?” roared Peter; then, in gentler tones: “An’ what did *you* say, Janet?”

“I jest said, ‘I’m fine able to fight my ain battles, feyther.’”

“Janet, ye’re a guid woman, an’——” here that split cane rod danced before the Elder’s blinkin’ gaze—“but I canna marry ye, for tho’ everybody thinks I’m weel aff, I lost a’ my money in a gold-finding thingie.”

“Peter,” said Janet, putting her hands

tenderly on his shoulders and gazing into his eyes, "it's no yer money I want, it's juist yersel', an' together we'll soon fill anither stockin' wi' siller, laddie."

For a moment the Elder struggled hard with himself; rods, reels, lines, and dainty little flies danced before his eyes, but he choked the greed in his throat with an effort. "Janet, we'll tae the meenister noo aboot the banns."

A month later the village was gay with the festivities of Peter and Janet's wedding, and the most prized present was a long parcel containing a complete dry-fly outfit, with a note inside: "A wedding present from the Sassenach."

IV

A LESSON IN POLITENESS

IN far Glengollach, where the silvery Quaich prattles to the heather in its meanderings through the glen, there was great excitement over the news of a muckle fish in the manse pool. The Rev. John McGollach being on holiday, had deputed Peter Tamson, Elder of the Kirk, to fish the said pool in his absence.

Tinny McTavish, so called because he played the dual part of village tinsmith and town crier, had got permission from Lord Peat to fish the lower pools of his water for a week. Part of this fishing included the manse pool, from the opposite side to the manse; and Tinny had made up his mind that to *his* "bow and spear" should fall the leviathan *Salmo salar*. Unfortunately, Peter made exactly the

same resolve just as Mrs. McTavish dropped her halfpenny in the ladle at collection time on Sunday evening. It leaked out in the kirkyaird gossip that both wielders of the rod were after the monster, and half the village kept watch and ward over the manse pool from dawn till dusk on the Monday, but were disappointed. Peter knew that Tinny couldn't leave his patch-kettle business until four o'clock in the afternoon, and on Monday had a series of announcements to make throughout the village which would prevent his going to the "watter." Chivalrous as a King Arthur knight, though really consumed with an all-devouring fear that Tinny would wipe his eye over the big one, the Elder forebore to fish, but on Monday evening late heard it said at the Peat Arms over a glass of very raw whisky, that Tinny had given out that his capture of this particular salmon would most certainly not be longer delayed than Tuesday afternoon. It was even betting, for although Peter undoubtedly had been until now the champion fisher of the glen,

he was turning over to years, and his hand was not quite so steady as of yore; he was more prone to the sudden excitement which leads to apoplexy, and his partisans feared that Tinny's more even temperament and cooler head would put the Elder out of court when it came to the critical moment.

On Tuesday afternoon Peter sallied forth with his twenty-foot Greenheart, and reached the waterside in a "tremble" of excitement. He sat down by the edge of the pool, and, drawing out his horn-rimmed spectacles of prodigious size, settled with a sigh to select the "flee" that should slay the monster. As he conned the well-worn book with its moth-eaten flannel leaves, the salmon gave a loup and fell back with a splash that startled Peter's spectacles off his nose, and he sighed as he replaced them with trembling hand. Under ordinary circumstances, he would have sworn in Gaelic, but the occasion was too solemn, and his sigh was more expressive than any oath—even in Gaelic. He chose a somewhat

worn yellow eagle, and after carefully knotting it on the cast, tried every knot of the latter to see that no weakness existed. Rising, he strode to the edge of the pool and commenced to fish. As he did so he saw Tinny, followed by a rag and a bobtail crowd, descend the rocks on the opposite side of the pool.

Peter hooked a small grilse when half-way down the pool, and landed it as a boy would a trout, so powerful was the twenty-footer. "First bleed," he murmured, as he extracted the hook and hid the bonny fish under a patch of fern. He carefully rinsed the blood from the hook, spat on it once more for luck, and commenced again.

Tinny, who had evidently visited the Peat Arms before sallying forth, was in a jocular mood, and shouted pleasantries searing to Peter's soul across the tumbling waters. "Ay, Elder, hae ye got the muckle yin yet?" accompanied by a mocking laugh.

"No *yet*," said Peter, mildly, for he knew his rival's object was to so enrage

him that he would lose his temper sorely, when good-bye to all chance of the fish.

“A doot yer wand’s some stiff i’ the backbone; gae to Mary an’ borrow the meat saw, an’ tak’ six inches aff the p’int, an’ ye’ll hae mair chance, my mannie.”

Peter’s “birse” was rising, but he gripped the rod tightly and made no reply.

At this humorous sally on Tinny’s part his bodyguard gave vent to very ribald laughter, which made the Elder start, especially when Jimmy McTonal, the postman, who was no friend of Peter’s, added insult to injury by yelling in Gaelic: “Dinna be sae blate, Peter, man; ye’re gae guid at the troots, an’ ye ken the price o’ a pun o’ saft soap richt weel, but Tinny’s gaun tae wipe yer eye this time.”

“Chuckle-heedit swine,” murmured Peter to himself.

Presently he got the “rug” again, and it was evidently a heavy fish. Peter hurried down over stones and heather after the descending salmon; he muttered a prayer in Gaelic: “Guid gie’s the muckle beast, for if I dinna get him I’ll

hauf murder Tinny whether *he* gets it or no." Now up, now down, but never showing, dashed the fish; and as the minutes sped Peter had almost made himself believe it was the prize.

"Anither troot, Peter, gie him short shuft, for ye'll spile the peel for the big yin," yelled Tinny, adding as a sarcastic touch: "Maybe yere wand's some weak even for the troots, it's gey auld."

But curiously enough Peter was awakening to the prescience that although this might not be the big fish, he would get the latter before the day was out, and the very thought of laying it out in triumph on the stone floor at the Peat Arms, on his way home, before an admiring crowd was delicious unction to his soul, and so he kept his temper and held hard on to the fish, never saying a word. Eventually it gave in, and, as it floated belly up to the side, Peter dexterously gaffed it, a fine new run salmon of twenty-five pounds.

"A gey guid trootie that," shouted Tinny.

“Ay, and his big brither ’ll be lyin’ beside him afore lang,” said the Elder placidly.

This enraged Tinny, who shook his fist at the Elder and yelled: “I’ll bet ye a hunderweicht o’ the best saft soap till a clay pipe he’ll dae naething o’ the sort.”

“Done wi’ ye,” roared the Elder.

At these pleasantries the crowd yelled: “Well deen, Elder, if ye win the soap ye’ll stan’ Tinny a hot dook i’ yer muckle washin’ tub, for he’s as muckle dirt on’s tongue as ye hae on yer whole body.”

The crowd had got sick of Tinny and now plumped for the Elder, as their last outburst showed; and, deserting the whisky-sodden tinsmith, wended their way over by the bridge and down the glebe to Peter’s side. “God, Elder, A hope ye’ll beat him, for he’s an ill-tongued sumph.”

“Three cheers for Elder Tamson,” roared the crowd.

“W’isht, w’isht,” said Peter, “dinna mak’ sic a noise.”

Tinny was still sitting glowering over a tin box full of flies and the Elder

wondered what the game could be ; why did not his opponent commence to fish ? Having stowed the fish in the fern Peter walked to the top of the pool and began again. The big fish—and a monster he was (Rait, Lord Peat's keeper, put him at over fifty pounds)—was lying behind a sunken rock in the middle of the pool half-way down, there was a beautiful oily swirl behind the rock, and a well-thrown fly would search it thoroughly if properly placed. Peter put on a fresh cast, tried it severely, mounted a new yellow eagle, and cast again. He fished on until he was within twenty yards of the fateful spot, when, to his astonishment and disgust, up got Tinny, and, stepping into the water, kilt and all, threw his fly right in front of the Elder's.

Now, as everybody who is a fisher knows, it is a heinous sin to go into a pool in front of another who is first in the pool ; and Peter was astounded at the crime, for it was nothing less to his simple country soul, and, personally, he would as soon have cut his throat as done such a thing.

But it was the last straw; his temper, already sorely tried, was now in shreds, and could be bottled up no longer.

“Ye weevily shargour” (dwarf), “hoo daur ye? I’ll put it in that pudden heid o’ yours that no chentleman coes intil a peel in front of anither chentleman what is fishing, ye lousy forkitail.” The crowd yelled with delight; now there was going to be a battle; would the Elder or Tinny win?

“Peter Tamson, Elder o’ the Kirk, an’ seller o’ saft soap, candy bools, an’ ither commodities, I haf his lordship’s per-meesion tae fish here, an’ fish I will when an’ how it plaises me, ye gowk.” The Elder reeled and came up the bank.

“Go it, Elder, dinna lat him fear ye; he’s an ill-faured body.”

Peter did not reply, but taking out the worn fly-book, with an expression of the grimmest determination, sat down and looked it through. At the end, in a pocket of the flap, was a huge six-inch Gordon, with which Peter often did execution in the spring, and knotting it on to a treble

cast in place of the single one he had been using, he carefully soaked it and tried it hard.

“Noo we’ll see some fun,” said Andy Pitlurg, the village scaffy (scavenger). “Keep ae eye on Peter an’ anither on Tinny, but mair especially on Tinny; for, if I’m no mistook, Tinny’s gaun tae get the biggest fricht he’s ever had in’s life.”

Peter now stepped down to the water’s edge and began to cast. Never was the Elder in finer form. Swish went the great twenty-foot Greenheart, and the fly lit gently on the water and floated a moment before it sank beneath the surface. At every cast he drew nearer to Tinny, who was thrashing away vigorously, and presently he struck hard. The effect was instantaneous, for Tinny tottered, his rod waved ominously as he dropped it in the pool and head over heels he went, his large brogued feet coming uppermost as he was swirled down in the boiling flood.

“Droon ’im, droon ’im, Elder !” roared the delighted crowd.

Peter was now in the highest good

humour and chuckled hoarsely as he held on tight to the kilted monstrosity which gurgled and struggled and swore weird oaths in Gaelic at the end of the line; but Peter had him well under control, and each time Tinny's head appeared he gave the rod a 'tit' and down went the tousled red head once more.

"Dod, it's as good as a play," said Pitlurg. "Are ye reely gaun tae droon him, Elder?"

"Na, na, I think he's had his lesson," said Peter, and reeling up hard, guided the brilliant tartan kilt of Tinny over to the manse side of the pool. "Pitlurg, gae up tae Mary at the manse an' borrow a suit of claes an' the meenister's dug-wheep," said Peter grimly. Pitlurg was off like a shot, and presently returned bearing a powerful dog-whip and an old suit of the Reverend McGollach's.

Gradually the now exhausted, though still cursing, Tinny came nearer, until, holding the rod in his left hand, Peter stooped down and plunged the gaff hard into Tinny's kilt and lugged him ashore.

Alas ! he had struck more than the kilt ! as Tinny's awful yells indicated.

Peter dragged him up the bank, and holding him with his left hand, he administered a good thrashing with the dog-whip. " I'll teach ye " (skelp) " tae go in front of a chentleman fishing before ye." (Skelp.)

Tinny roared at last for mercy, and Peter thereupon drew out his old wicker-covered flask and gave him a thundering good dram of neat whisky, while Pitlurg and the others stripped off the dripping kilt and arrayed him in the minister's old suit.

Warmed and dry, Tinny thrust out his hairy hand to the Elder, and murmured—

" Elder, ye're a chentleman, an' I'm sorry whateffer."

Peter grasped the outstretched hand, and said—

" I forgi'e ye, Tinny, but dinna ye forget in a hurry yer lesson in politeness."

V

THE ELDER'S BAIRN

GLENGOLLACH was in a fizzle of suppressed excitement, for an interesting event was pending in the household of Peter Tamson : General Merchant and Pillar of the Kirk.

The lucky woman to hear the news first was Mrs. McGlashan, the village midwife, one of the old-fashioned homely sort—but a godly woman and a clean.

As the Elder stood proudly at the kirkplate in the doorway of the Parish Church on a certain Sunday in June, it was observed by that nikkim (mischief), Dod Scroggie, son of Wullie Scroggie the milkman, that as Mrs. McGlashan dropped her widow's mite in the plate, the Elder seized her arm, and blushing very red, had a hurried confab with her on what—by

her excitement—was a very important topic; for Dod distinctly heard the words rolled out in a tremulous bass whisper by the Elder—“about the saxteenth o’ next month, but mind, *no a word tae onybody.*”

Shaking her head smilingly until the black bugle trimming of her Sunday best bonnet rattled again, she passed into the sacred edifice. Dod with the occult wit of a seventh child (the Scroggie family were fourteen in number), quickly put two and two together and grinned impertinently at the Elder, who blushed to see that his secret was already out, and godly man though he was, and had never done the like before within the sacred precincts, fetched Dod a skelp on the lug which sped the latter hot-face on his way to the Scroggie family pew.

I fear the Elder paid but little heed to the ghostly ministrations of the Reverend John McGollach that Sunday morning, and his equanimity was in no wise restored when, as the congregation trilled forth—

“Father, our children keep;

We know not what is coming on the earth,”

Dod fairly skirled with laughter, and bolting out of the pew, made a hasty beeline down the kirkyaird.

He made straight for the edge of the common where he descried sundry sinners playing bools (marbles) on a grass-bereft patch which lent well to the sacrilegious game.

"Hullo, Dod, is the kirk scaled yet? or did ye dee a bolt? Yer oot gey soon."

"Na, they're hammerin' awa' at the laist hymn, but I've found oot a secret about Peter Tamson the Elder."

"No!"

"I *did* that."

"What is't?"

"I'm no tae tell onybody!"

"I'll gie ye my best glassy bool" (a large striped glass marble beloved of youth).

"I winna tell."

"I'll gie ye a pennyworth o' conversation lozengers and a salmon flee."

"N—o," in a weakening tone.

"Come on, Dod," said Sandy Tosh, "an' I'll put a haepennyworth o' strippit ba's" (peppermint striped balls) "til't."

Dod capitulated promptly.

“ Weel,” breathlessly, “ Janet Tamson’s goin’ to ha’e a bairn on the saxteenth o’ next month.”

An awed but delighted chorus of “ No ! ” greeted this dread information.

“ Wha tell’t ye, Dod ? ”

“ Niver ye mind *wha* tell’t me, bit tae prove I’m richt, I’ll no tak’ the sweeties till the saxteenth.”

Dod Scroggie was the hero of the day, and speculation was rife amongst the boys of the village as to how he came in possession of such a splendid secret. Had he dared to interview Dr. Havers ? The idea was scouted, for they well knew that Dod would have been the prompt recipient of a “ hot lug ” if he had dared to beard that fearsome man.

Dod never told how he found out, but many were the congratulations which poured in on the Elder as he stood at the receipt of custom in his General Store on the Monday.

He had barely got the shutters down when Marget McPherson called for a boxie

o' Colman's Sterch, and slyly said, as the Elder reached down the required commodity—

“ Ay, Elder, I hear o' a great event for the saxteenth o' next month.”

The Elder dropped the starch box like a hot potato, as he whispered, “ Wha tell't ye, wumman ? ”

“ Oh, abody in the glen kens.”

“ It beats me,” said Peter, “ hoo't cam' oot.” As he parcelled up the Colman he thought hard. “ I ken, it's that wratch Dod Scroggie.”

“ Weel, weel, never mind, Elder, be sure and gi'e Janet my congratulations.”

“ Thank ye, thank ye.”

Peter had never done such a roaring trade in his life. Bootlaces, soft soap, matches, cheese, golden sighrup, indeed all the necessities of glen life, and some of the luxuries, made delicate cloak under which to congratulate Peter and Janet.

As the days passed on many and varied were the little presents which Peter received over the counter against the great event—bootees, tippets, jaicketys, comfy

shawlies and such-like ; never such a heterogeneous collection or with such goodwill ; for Peter and Janet were popular in the glen.

Kindly sentinels—if curious—watched the door of the Elder's cottage and that of Mrs. McGlashan, and like wildfire spread the news at five p.m. on the sixteenth that Dr. Havers had been seen striding up the village street, the dread black-bag in his hand—the bag which 'twas whispered with bated breath had held “thoosands o' bairns” for their conveyance from the Doctor's medicine closet, out of which of course *all* self-respecting babes proceeded.

Excitement was even more excited as he was seen hammering at Mrs. McGlashan's door, and in “twa ticks” the pair proceeded at a run to the Elder's abode.

By ten o'clock on that auspicious night it was known to the world of Glengollach that Mrs. Tamson had presented the Elder with a grand boy of twelve pounds weight ; to use the Elder's own expression and favourite simile, “as bonny as a clean run spring salmon.”

Next day Dod Scroggie was considerably richer in the worldly goods of youth, and every child that entered the shoppie that day was presented by the Elder's own hands with a large packet of conversation sweeties, free, gratis, and for nothing !

Oh, it was a great day. The Elder's friends who called to "speir" for mother and son were ushered solemnly into the "sittin' parlour" and asked to partake of bannocks and real Gouda cheese of the best quality, with a glass of sherry wine or a drop of Glengollach whisky to wash them down. Toasts of course were drunk, and the one which pleased the Elder most was proposed by Tinny McTavish—

"Here's tae you and Janet an' the loon, an' may he be as guid a fisherman as yersel', Elder."

The "kirsenin'" of the boy by the name of Peter John McGollach was another great event a little later, and what the subsequent banquet at the Glengollach Arms must have cost Peter in bannocks, cheese, sherry wine and whisky, I tremble to think.

It was late one winter evening, in the end of January, as the Elder turned into the Glengollach Arms for a glass o' whisky and a "crack" about fishing with some of his neighbours.

The Reverend John McGollach was in the seat of honour by the fire, Tinny McTavish was on his right, and Davy Rait, Lord Peat's keeper, was on the left. Each was puffing vigorously at a short black clay as the Elder came in.

"Tak' a seat, Peter," said the Reverend John.

"Thank ye, meenister, I wull," and Peter sank into an easy-chair which, if the covering had seen better days, was very comfortable.

"Mony clean fish in her yet?" said Peter to Davy, referring to the river Quaich.

"Man, she's got mair bonny fish in her the year than I've seen sin' '69," replied Davy.

"Man, that's guid hearin'." Tinny felt slighted, he thought *he* might have been asked the question, so turned on the Elder.

“ It’s time that laddie o’ yours, he’s turned nine, had killed a fish, isn’t it, Elder ? ”

“ Ay, Tinny, I’m rayther worried about him, he’s fonder o’ the bools than the fishin’ rod at present.”

“ It’s a peety, Elder, it’s a peety.”

After discussing many things piscatorial the party broke up; but the Elder had been given furiously to think on the way home, and on going to bed dreamed horribly of Tinny’s boy standing by his bedside holding a gargantuan salmon, while his own boy held a tiny trout, and Tinny’s face grinned out of the darkness at the Elder, whose brow was covered with a cold sweat as he woke with a start at three a.m.

Next day was Saturday, and as Peter junior entered the shop where his father was weighing butter, the paternal eye gleamed kindly on him.

“ Aye, Peter, it’s a gran’ fishin’ day the day; wud you like tae tak’ the little fourteen-fit roddie an’ see if ye can catch a salmon for yer mither and me ? ”

“No the day. I’m playin’ bools wi’ Dod Scroggie.”

“It’s aye bools an’ Dod Scroggie; little good ye’ll get o’ the pair o’ them.”

But Peter junior was gone. Tinny McTavish came in for an ounce of twist tobacco. He was a little shamefaced for having baited the Elder about little Peter and the fishing.

“I’m sorry, Peter, I spoke about the laddie.”

“Ye canna help yer kittle temper, Tinny,” said the Elder mildly, as he gave him a quarter ounce over weight, which fact was duly noted by the tinsmith.

“Where’s Peter gone?”

“Oh, bools an’ Dod Scroggie as usual on a Setterday,” with a scowl.

Tinny went his way and soon came on Peter and Dod.

“Peter Tamson, junior, I’m needin’ ye; get you hame, Dod Scroggie.”

Dod, who had more than once felt the weight of Tinny’s hand, was off like a shot.

Taking Peter by the hand he led him

into his parlour, and going to a large old-fashioned bureau pulled out a drawer.

Peter's eyes nearly dropped out of his head, for there lay literally dozens of the finest bools he'd ever seen: glassies, cheenas, peekers, rowlers, and what not.

"My certie, sic a lot, Tinny."

"Ay, there's four dozen o' them."

"D'ye play wi' them?"

"No, Peter, but I ken a laddie I'll gie them to if he's a guid boy and does what his feyther wants."

"What's that?"

"If little Peter Tamson'll come to the watter wi' me and try hard to kill a wee salmon for his feyther."

"*I'll come, Tinny; oh, I'll come.*"

"Mind, ye dinna get the bools if ye dinna catch a salmon."

"Imphm."

Presently, Mrs. McTavish cut a fine "jeely piece," which she gave to Peter and another to Tinny, and a flask of whisky for the latter.

They sped to the manse pool, scene of many a fishy fight, and Tinny mounted a

Jock Scott on Peter's casting line, and carrying him bodily, rod and all, on to a big rock from which casting was easy, told him to "ca' awa'."

Little Peter, who had been instructed in the rudiments of the art by his father, and thoroughly understood how a fish should be run, made his first essay.

"Work the flee gently, my mannie, no sae jerky like."

"Did ye see him, Tinny? he cam' up like a flash an' jeest missed the flee."

"Aye, I did that; noo jeest cast gently above him again."

At last little Peter's sporting instincts were hatched, and he trembled like a leaf in the east wind as he got the "rug" and the fish was on.

"Canny noo, play him gently, gi'e him the butt, up wi' the p'int o' the rod, slack a wee, noo reel in hard, I'll gaff him in a meenute."

Down slid Tinny, gaff in hand, warily he crept; at last a flash, a turn of the wrist and he flung a bonny little spring salmon of 5 lb. high on the bank.

But little Peter in his excitement slipped and fell heavily into the pool; he roared lustily, but as he floated past Tinny, the latter deftly gaffed him by the seat of his kilt and slung him gently up the bank beside the fish.

Out came the flask. "Guid luck tae ye, laddie; juist take ae moothful to keep oot the chill and then hame wi' yer fish tae yer feyther as fast's ye can rin. Aff noo."

The dripping laddie, clutching his salmon by the gills, was soon in the paternal shop, and dumping down the fish on the floor was in his father's arms sobbing hysterically, "I've killed a fish, I've killed a fish."

It was a proud day indeed for the Elder, and after tea he strode down to Tinny's, bearing a parcel which McTavish told me contained sugar, tea, a whole half-pound of twist tobacco, and a bottle of the very best Glengollach whisky.

VI

THE ELDER'S PRODIGAL

PETER TAMSON, the worthy Elder and store-keeper of Glengollach, was much exercised in his mind about the "on-goings" of his son and heir. The Elder had some cause for his misgivings, for "little" Peter, as his son was called in contradistinction to Peter the Elder, had shown a vile persistence in his attentions to Jeannie Todd, the souter's (shoemaker's) eldest daughter, and there bade fair to be a horrid scandal in Glengollach, for no one dreamt of the Elder permitting an alliance with Wully Todd's family. Such a thing could not be considered for a moment. Wully Todd was a *puir haverin'* buddy; drunk at least once a week, forby on all Bank Holidays and other festive occasions, such as funerals, weddings,

christenings and the like, so that, reckoned on Mr. Schooling's lines, he must have been in a state of intoxication about three hundred days in the year.

Jeannie was a good-looking hizzy; stalwart, upstanding, five feet eight inches in her stocking soles, red-haired, broad of hip and shoulder, and with a tigerish pair of eyes of that peculiar green which, seen in any woman, is at once a snare and a warning to any man who values his peace of mind. The Elder had had various broad hints given him as he stood at receipt of custom in the "shoppie," and weighed out with Gladstonian sternness of purpose the weekly requirements of Glengollach in pounds of soft soap, candles, traycle, and the like.

"Tak' my wird," said Mrs. McHoudie, the village Gamp, "there's nae guid'll come o' Little Peter liltin' on the braes wi' Jeannie Todd; he's a gey an' cam-speckle laddie, an' a body wud be sorry tae see him wreck's life ower yon bissom."

The Elder remained for long unmoved; he could not—aristocrat of shoppies—for

a moment believe that a son of his, far less his *only* son, would lower himself to "keeping company" with a wastrel buddy's daughter; and for another thing he hated gossip, strange though it may seem in a place like Glengollach, and so let things take their course for a time. But one fell Sunday in June, when he was wandering up the river to note any fish in the pools—for as you know he was a keen fisher—he espied the figures of a youth and a maid seated on a rock near the Sandy Haven pool. Some instinct made him crawl with all the cunning of a Fenimore Cooper Indian until he was within a few yards of where they sat, and he listened and watched, all unsuspected by the budding Romeo and Juliet.

"Jeannie, A'll no stand 't ony longer. Ye were up the brae at the blæberries on Monday wi' Linto McLeod; on Tuesday ye were at the Oddfellows' picnic in Glen-gairn wi' Sandy Tosh; Wednesday ye were at the prayer meetin'—fancy *you* at a prayer meetin'—wi' Dod McDonald; an' noo ye *condaescend* to come oot wi' me."

Jeannie laughed the laugh of the daughter of the horse-leech and turned her flaming green eyes on Little Peter, but never said a word. There was no need, for with a passion beyond his years Peter seized her and kissed her red lips until she cried for mercy.

“Whiles I think ye’re the de’il himsel’, Jeannie. Yer eyes jeest seem to sook the soul oot o’ a chap, an’ mony a time A say tae mysel’ : ‘I’ll gi’e her up, she’s no canny’.”

Jeannie let the flames in her green eyes die out for the moment as she laughed a wholesome laugh. “Peter, laddie, ye needna fear for me or yoursel’ either, for yer the only loon in the glen that’s no feared at me. An’ pray, Mr. Tamson,” in a mincing, pernickety tone, “what’ll ye do if I elect tae keep company *every day* o’ the week wi’ *any* lad A choose? What is’t to you? What’ll ye do?”

Little Peter’s birse was up, and with fervour he seized her by the arms, gazing steadfastly into the again flaming green eyes as he said with a man’s passion : “I’ll

thrash ye wi' a stick till ye howl for maircy."

"I'd let ye, but I'd *no* howl for maircy. I'd let ye thrash me dead first."

"I believe ye wud, Jeannie, an' I believe that's why I love ye, lassie."

"D'ye love me as muckle as tae gang to the Elder an' say this very day : 'I'm gaun tae marry Jeannie Todd, feyther, whether you an' ma mither wull or no'?'"

Peter gritted his teeth as he hissed at her : "Aye, and by gum, A'll gang and dee't noo, an' if ye're faithless aifter that, Jeannie, afore God I'll jeest throttle ye."

Jeannie sank into Peter's arms and kissed him again. The fiat was forth and the promise was given. After that last kiss they came to earth again and basked silently in the glorious summer sun. The Elder lay and gasped. His fists were clenched and his breath came thick and short. He hated the girl, but he could not help admiring the tact and strategy of this little fiery Eve of the glen, who knew exactly how to take her lover's mood and profit by it; and he could understand,

too, how his son was fired by the gorgeous masses of her red hair and those flaming green eyes which dealt destruction to all within their ken. With a sigh Little Peter extracted from the pocket of his sporran—for he was, of course, in a kilt—a bag of “conversation sweeties,” which his father, from his eyrie behind a rock, recognised as one he had given Little Peter for Church purposes that very morning. Peter extracted a heart-shaped sugar medallion of a brilliant pink, which bore the words: “True love never yet lacked fire.” He broke it in half, and, placing one half in Jeannie’s bonnie red mouth, crunched up the other with his great strong teeth.

“Haena ye a token tae gi’ me, Peter?”

“I’ll get ane for ye.”

“No; it must be the noo, or the spell wull be broken,” sighed Jeannie, now all sentiment and honey.

Peter turned out his pockets. A big knife, a broken pencil, some gut casting-lines, a skyly (a slate pencil), two pennies, a threepenny-bit and a hank of string.

“Brak the threepenny in twa, keep you ae hawf an’ I’ll hang the ither hawf roon my neck as long’s I live.”

“I wud, but I canna, Jeannie; my feyther gie’t me this mornin’, an’ tell’t me tae put it in the plate at kirk the nicht; it’s a meesionary service.”

“An’ ye care mair for a meesionary than for me? Ye’re a’ the same, nae fooshion or a backbone tae the lot o’ you lads.”

“Ye lie, Jeannie, an’ ye ken ye lie; but I’ll dae’t and I’ll tak’ the thrashin’ my feyther’ll gi’e me; I’ll tak’ it for your sake an’ be prood.”

“Ye winna tell him?”

“I wull.”

“Peter,” earnestly, “I love ye wi’ a’ ma hairt an’ soul an’ I’ll mairry naebody but yoursel’.”

When Peter arrived at the paternal cottage he found the tea “set,” and he sat down opposite his father and mother rather ill at ease, but with an assumed jauntiness, which was so foreign to his nature that it gave him away at once.

“ Weel, Peter,” quoth the Elder, “ where was ye a’ afternoon ? ”

Little Peter gripped himself together. “ Up the river wi’ Jeannie Todd,” rising from his chair, his face red with suppressed emotion, “ and I’m goin’ tae mairry her, mither.”

“ Oh, ma laddie, ma laddie, she’s no——”

“ Mither, an’ ye too, feyther, dinna abouse her; she’s my choice an’ I’ll mairry no ither.”

“ Then ye’ll *no* mairry,” said the Elder, who had also risen. “ Ye’re auchteen years o’ age, an’ *what* ha’e ye tae mairry on? I’ll no gi’e ye the shop for yon bissom tae——”

“ Stop, feyther,” shouted Peter, “ dinna mak’ me forget yer age, an’ that ye are ma feyther; but I’ll no hear onybody abuse the lassie that’s tae be my *wife*.” He lingered manfully on the last great word, the first time he had used it personally, and now it had a significance which demanded the low-toned reverence which he gave it. “ If ye’ll no help me tae mak’ enough to keep a wife on, I’ll ha’e tae seek

it elsewhere." The tears of his mother, the oburgations of the Elder, were in vain.

He put a shilling from his bank (an old tobacco jar) into the plate for the threepenny he had annexed, and that night broke with strong fingers the little coin, bored a hole in each half, one to hang round Jeannie's beautiful creamy neck, the other to hang for life on the guard of his silver watch-chain, a birthday present from his mother.

At the end of a week Peter had shaken the dust of Glengollach from his feet and was on the sea for California, where Lord Peat had much land, and said he'd find him an opening whenever he cared.

So little Peter interviewed the factor and brought it about. He wrote once a month to his mother, and once a week to Jeannie, but his heart was sore against his father, who never mentioned his name, though he grieved silently by the riverside on Sunday afternoons and prayed a blessing on his prodigal, as he called him, and a safe return "some day" to the now ageing arms that longed hungrily for him.

Jeannie ripened in beauty, and, so the Reverend John McGollach said, in grace. She became a member of the Church, forsook all her former swains, tidied up the paternal nest (her father was a widower), weaned her father from drink, and generally so behaved that Peter Tamson the Elder was ashamed of himself; but with his sturdy Scottish character would not bend, although sometimes it seemed as if he might be strained to breaking point by the absence of his dearly beloved.

One glorious May day Tinny McTavish was buying an "unce o' twist" for his old cutty pipe, and seemed specially communicative. "Aye, Elder, I hear Lord Peat's let the little lodge for the season already."

"Has he, Tinny? Wha's the lucky man? There's some richt bonny pools on that bit o' the river. A hope he's a guid fisherman that's ta'en 't."

"Some chap made a fortune in ile in Californy, A hear; he's comin' next week. There'll be nae mair days on that

watter for you and me, Elder, I doot, till the tenant's gone."

"Weel, weel. I hope his lordship's gettin' a guid rent for't, onyway."

"Sax hundred pounds for the sax months."

"Dod, that's graund, for 'twas aye let for three."

"Ay, an' his lordship's nae sae weel aff as he was."

There were great preparations at the Lodge, which, it seemed, had been taken not for the season, but for a period of years. New furniture from a great London firm of decorators, a complete staff of servants, four gorgeous cars in the garage, two extra gardeners in the garden, and the place was transformed. An elderly butler called at Peter's shop and gave an order for all kinds of stores, the magnitude of which made the Elder's heart loup within him, and it louped higher when the man paid for the order in jingling gold of the realm. It amounted to nearly as much as Peter drew in a twelvemonth. Peter was supping that night at the manse, and

after a dish of soans followed by tripe smothered in onions, and an epple tairt with blæberries, the Elder's tongue was unloosed.

"Tak' yer pipe, Peter, the toddy's coming," quoth the Reverend McGollach. The servant lass served the steaming brew, and they both gave a grunt of satisfaction as the minister happit the fire with fresh peat. "Ay, Peter, I'm thinkin' the new tenant at the little Lodge is goin' tae dae graun' things for Glengollach."

"Dod, I've every reason to think it," replied the Elder, "for the butler body was at the shoppie this mornin' and fair roupit me stock, an' syne paid the bill o' fourteen pun in gowd sovereigns."

"The de'il he did," said the Reverend. "But I can cap that, for he's goin' tae be mairrit in Glengollach Kirk o' Friday week, and I've to ha'e a' preparations made—a special licence forby, an' he enclosed a twenty-pound note for ma fee."

"Dod, that beats a'."

"I'm nae doon yet though, Elder, for

he enclosed anither twa notes for twenty pounds each tae feast a' Glengollach aifter."

"Wha the de'il is he?"

"I ken nae mair than ye, and what's mair, nane o' us will until I meet him an's bride at the kirk door."

Naturally, Glengollach could not sleep for very excitement; it drank a good deal more, which, under the circumstances, could be forgiven. Even Wully Todd, the reformed black sheep, broke out and was found helpless in the manse pigsty the Saturday before the wedding. On Friday morning the village was gay with bunting and wild flowers, and a large party of local landowners, headed by Lord and Lady Peat, marched into the church at 1.30 precisely. The "village" also therein assembled; it was to be a mere "quality" wedding, they were disappointed; but presently they got a surprise. Elder Tamson, although there was no collection, had deemed it his duty to be at the door, and was astounded to see a tall, handsome man descend from the

magnificent car which rolled up to the door.

“My God,” whispered the shaken Elder to himself, “it’s like my Peter; but this yin’s a gentleman an’——”

At that moment the gentleman took the Elder’s arm and whispered : “You’ll no refuse to come in to my wedding, feyther,” at the same time leading him into the church. As they passed the Tamson’pew, Little Peter put his hand out to Janet, his mother, and whispered : “Come, mother.” Scarce able to believe her eyes or hearing, Janet took his other arm and marched to the front pew in a mist of scalding though happy tears. The Elder and Janet were in a fog. Who was the bride ?

Presently a queenly girl came up the aisle, a quality lady no doubt, who’d be ashamed of her husband’s parents and home : but gracious, whose arm was she leaning on ? *There* was Wully Todd in a grand frock coat of no glen cut, with a clean shave, well-oiled hair and a rose in his button-hole as perjink as a peacock. Deep down in his heart the Elder was

thankful Little Peter had stuck to Jeannie, who had turned out so well, and who would never shame the humble shop. The service proceeded, and as the wheezy organ rolled out the Elder's favourite—

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes,”

instead of that body Mendelssohn's “Wedding March,” he felt his cup was full.

The wedding breakfast was held in the village hall, and Lord Peat proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom, to which Peter the Little replied in easy, genial terms. At last the happy couple rolled away in the great car for their honeymoon tour; and I fear it was ever the Elder's boast, for he was beside himself with joy, that not a man in Glengollach went to bed sober. Surely the Recording Angel will forgive that lapse, for Glengollach is sober as a rule.

VII

THE ELDER'S PAYING GUEST

YEARS sped on, and Peter the younger had returned to California with his bride, for his interests there demanded his personal attention. It was a bone of contention between him and his father, the Elder, that the latter remained on in his little cottage and shop and would not accept a penny-piece from his son. But, as the Elder frequently said to the Reverend McGollach : " I maun ha'e ma indepindence, an' A'll no tak' siller frae onybody, no even frae ma ain laddie."

One Monday night when Peter and the minister were deep in a dambrod (draught-board) problem, the Reverend John remarked that he had that day received a letter from one Delia Doggan of Chicago, who had taken Lord Peat's water for the

summer months, and requested him to suggest a cottage in which she and her French maid could live the simple life during her tenancy of the water.

“Noo, Peter, there’s nae place in the glen I’d recommend sae weel for a couple o’ possibly young and flichty lassies as yer ain hoose. Ye hiv’ the accommodation, and it’ll be a guid puckle siller i’ yer pooch by the time the season’s ower.”

“Man, I dinna think it wud dee. I’d like the siller fine, but can ye see me howkin’ i’ the gairden o’ a nicht wi’ a wee bit can’le, lookin’ for frogs for the madsel’s” (he meant mademoiselle) “brakfast?”

“Dinna faush yersel’ about that, Peter,” said the Reverend with a laugh, and speaking from his superior plant of knowledge; “I hae’t on the best uthority that the Frinch only eat frugs noo an’ again as a bit relish, jeest as you and me whiles tak’s a cup o’ birse tae” (tea with whisky in it). “Noo, Miss Doggan’s offerin’ ten guineas a week for twa bedrooms and twa sittin’ parlours, an’ ye can manage that; jeest ye dee’t, an’ I’ll send aff the prepaid

telegram I ha'e here, in the mornin'. Janet's a guid plain cook, her chappit " (mashed) "tatties are just graund, and ye'll get on fine, and forby there'll be a guinea or twa a week tae ye for daein' gillie, an' naebody kens the Quaich watter like yersel'."

"Weel, meenister, ye've aye ta'en a kindly interest in me an' Janet, an' A'll no deny ye this pleasure."

"That's richt, Peter man. Dod, she'll kill some bonny fish wi' you tae direc' her oxters" (shoulder).

It was settled, and Miss Doggan sent a wire to say that she'd expect "Mr. Thomson to meet the 12.30 from Euston on Saturday."

There was a grand spring cleaning at the cottage, the best linen sheets in lavender from the "bottom drawer" were duly placed on the big bed in the "best" bedroom, coarser ones in the maid's room. The neat white muslin curtains were looped up with blue baby ribbon; and old lustre jugs full of great heavenly scented cabbage roses adorned the "sittin'

parlour ”; while the “ little parlour ” was a bower of sweet peas, honeysuckle, and stocks.

Peter was much exercised in mind whether to meet the lady in “ lum ” (tall) hat and frock coat or to wear the garb of Old Gaul. The kilt won, and as the train drew up, only an hour late, Miss Doggan put an irate head out of the window and demanded of the station-master what had happened.

Mr. McTavish said he would inquire of the driver the reason of the delay, and after interviewing that functionary, returned with the news that “ Jimmy Stott, the driver, had a ‘ dird ’ ” (pain) “ ‘ in a holla teeth,’ and had gone over to Babbie Law’s tae get a ‘ plug ’ tae pit in’t,” so delayed the train at Kittlespurtle. Said “ plug ” being translated to Miss Doggan, showed that it consisted of a liberal application of raw whisky, with which the “ mouth had to be weel sweeled ” (rinsed) and then swallowed by the tortured one. Miss Doggan produced a gold-mounted notebook and therein recorded that the

Scotch use raw whisky with which to plug a hollow tooth ! At that moment the efficacy of the plug was apparent, for the driver rolled out of the engine cab, and reeled down the platform, loudly exclaiming that " he was sorry to delay the lady, whateffer, but a holla tooth was a holla tooth." Peter now approached, and, taking off his Hielan' bonnet, handed the lady from the carriage with the grace of a duke.

As she alighted he presented her with a lovely sprig of white heather (*not* as sold in Regent Street, but " the real Mackay ") and bade her " Welcome, lady, tae Glen-gollach."

Delia, for so I will call her, was charmed as she murmured : " Are you Mr. Thomson ? " with a broad Chicago drawl.

" I'm jeest plain Peter Tamson o' Glen-gollach, lady, at your service."

It was pure joy for the millionairess, this rustic, old world, quiet courtesy, as she'd been for months the target of every mother in the Peerage who had an impecunious son to settle in life ; and whose

bold, brazen ways were a contrast to those of the simple glen people with "kind hearts more than coronets!"

Delia stepped into her big Pierce-Arrow car, which had been sent down before, and now waited at the station door. Emmeline, her maid, was accommodated in the back seat with Peter, who, never having been in a car before, showed distinct signs of nervousness. As the car dashed round corners almost on one wheel, the Elder's feelings got the better of him, and he clung to Emmeline until she fairly screamed, leaving marks on her arms which remained for days, so powerful was his grip.

At last they reached the cottage and found Janet Tamson curtsyng on the doorstep. Delia got out, and, seizing the astonished Janet by both hands, planted a kiss on her rosy cheek as she exclaimed: "It's just bully, Mrs. Thomson."

Janet blushed at the honour and bade her enter the house. She showed Delia her rooms and the latter sank into a fine old easy-chair, the cretonne cover of which

was resplendent with impossible but delicious roses. After a wash and change of dress she sat down to a homely lunch of hotch-potch, a braw fool (a big chicken), curds and cream, and a muckle bannock, to which she did such ample justice that she had subsequently to request Emmeline to "loosen my corsets a few."

As the following day was Sunday, Delia requested the Elder to enlighten her as to the spiritual opportunities of the glen folk. "Have a cigarette, Mr. Tamson?"

"Na, thank ye, lady; A dinna care about thae paper thingies."

"Well, do smoke your pipe; I'd love it."

Peter sat shyly down and puffed. "Weel, we're brawly served wi' kirks i' the glen; there's the Wee Free" (with a contemptuous sniff), "there's the Pisky chapel—ye'll be Pisky nae doot."

"What is Pisky, Peter?"

"Eepis-co-pal."

"Ah, I see; and is that all?"

"Na, there's *the auld kirk*, an' Maister McGollach's a graund preacher, he has a maist extrordnar' knowledge o' the Scrip-

ters, a terrible ill-will at Auld Horny, an' dresses him doon ilka Sunda' jeest a treet."

"I see; but who is Auld Horny?"

Peter, shocked at such ignorance, replied: "Ta deffil, lassie—A mean lady."

"I'm going to hear Mr. McGollach."

"I'm richt gled tae hear 't; I fear't ye were Pisky."

After a glass of whisky, in which to drink her health, Peter was allowed to retire, while Delia, I regret to say, buried her face in the cushions of the chair and laughed quietly till her sides ached.

Next day she entered the sacred precincts at 11 a.m., and the gentleman at the plate by the door (it was not Peter's week of duty there), who was resplendent in a sort of evening dress coat and shepherd tartan trousers, asked her, in a hoarse whisper, "Are ye back or front?" She gazed at him in puzzled amusement, but the Elder was behind and gave her the cue, and she requested him of the dress coat to give her "a front in the gallery, please." She followed in the wake of the

dress coat, and was duly ushered into "a front." By this time the church was rapidly filling up, and she looked round to see if she could see J. M. Barrie "takkin' notts." You will have read *The Little Minister*, so we will take the congregation as read too.

Presently a prehistoric peep, in large check trousers and an impossible morning coat, bore in the sacred books, and ascended the pulpit stairs as if he was walking on "political" eggs and feared the stink if he broke them. He dumped the books down on the desk with a thump that must have made Auld Horny jump in his skin, and again returning to place a clean handkerchief and a glass of water on the shelf below the desk, he descended the stairs and waited with bated breath for the Theological Wrestler. Solemn of mien, calm and majestic, Mr. McGollach ascended the stairs of the pulpit with measured tread.

The beadle (verger) slammed the door on him, and as he descended the stairs, cast a wholly triumphant look at the

congregation, and at Delia in particular, as if to say: "We've got him noo." The service was commenced with a short prayer (twenty-five minutes!), in which Auld Horny and his snares figured largely, and poor Delia smiled as she mentally pictured him sharpening up his three-pronged fork in the hope that Mr. McGollach might some day come his way, when pity his gizzard! The prayer over, the flock were bidden meander through the various oases of the major portion of Psalm CXIX, the tune being started by aid of Maister McGlashan's (the precentor) tuning-fork.

Delia had asked Peter if they had a good organ in the church, and got the crushing reply: "We dinna approve o' worshipping' God by machinery in Glengollach, lady."

By this time the sweetie-laden air of the gallery was getting very pungent, and Delia had recourse to her smelling-salts; seeing which, a "blade" from the glen, who sat next her, tendered with a smile a large conversation lozenge, on which was printed in red letters, "Gin a body kiss

a body, need a body cry?" Her first impulse was to hit him over the head with her parasol, but on reflection she thought better of it, as he evidently meant well, and doubtless it was a Glen-gollach custom dating from feudal times!

Next followed a hymn, commencing "Here we suffer grief and pain," and the performance is best described by saying that there were *no* Carusos there! The Rev. McGollach now had recourse to the handkerchief from the shelf, and after a thrilling and bugle-like performance on his ruddy proboscis he proceeded to give out his text. It referred to Dives and Lazarus, and Delia feared it was of malice aforethought.

The congregation now sang a virile hymn, the chief refrain of which was that they were to a man "great sinners vile," and generally crawled in such a Heep-like manner through its twelve verses as to warrant the assumption that Auld Horny was somewhere round with his tongue in his cheek. After the hymn came a pleasant pause, during which a lot of soup

ladle boxes with handles six feet long were thrust under their noses (reminding Delia of the way they collected letters from the ship at Malta when there was quarantine). Delia couldn't think what on earth these weird instruments were for, until she saw and heard the pennies going in with a "plop." She popped in a sovereign as nonchalantly as she could, but was much annoyed when the Elder, who was at the handle end, spotted it like a hawk, and, extracting it from among its poorer brethren, wrapped it up carefully in a piece of old newspaper, which he unearthed from his trouser pocket, and once more consigned it to the ladle.

At last, faint with the heat, Delia was able to leave the sacred edifice, and was amused to see all the glen folks drawn up on either side of the kirkyard path "tae see the Amairacan leddy gae by."

After a hearty dinner of homely fare Peter suggested to her a stroll up the river to "mark" fish for the morrow, when he was to accompany her on her

first fishing expedition in Scotland. She had fished the American rivers, and those of Norway with her father; but didn't tell Peter this, as she anticipated some amusement from his instructions to one he deemed a complete novice in the gentle art. At three p.m. they strolled up the glen and sat down at the Sandy Haven Pool. Peter sucked at his beloved clay while Delia perfumed the air with the most expensive of Turkish cigarettes.

"Aye," said Peter musingly, "saamon are like women—kittle cattle; they're neither to haud nor tae bin'."

"What does that mean, Peter?"

"They are neither tae hold nor tae bind; ye canna capture them, they're aye elusive" (he intended no pun); "an' I suppose that's why men are aye tryin' tae capture them—because they're no easy tae catch."

Delia skilfully side-tracked Peter from fish to burning questions of the day. "What are your views on marriage, Peter?"

“ It’s thocht ower lichtly o’ now-a-days ;
it’s hie tae the kirk an’ syne tae the
Divorce Court a twalmonths efter.”

“ But surely the glen folks——”

“ Nae better than their neebors, an’ if
divorce was cheaper ye’d see as mony
workin’ folks i’ the coort as graund
folks.”

“ Would you really, I wonder ! ”

“ Ye would that.”

“ There seems less domestic trouble in
Eastern countries than at home, I think,
Peter.”

“ An’ why ? Becaas i’ the East he has
his w’y, an’ every man is a poleegamist at
hairt.”

“ Oh, Peter, surely not.”

“ I’m tellin’ ye.”

“ Oh, I should hate to be married and
feel I was only one of a crowd of wives.”

“ Yer husband nichtna hate it, tho’.”

“ It’s a doubtful compliment to my
charms.”

“ No ; it’s only a man’s natur.”

“ Well, Peter, I suppose some day I

shall make the experiment of appearing at the altar."

"An' a bonny peri ye'll be," said Peter, gallantly.

The Elder was beginning to scent that he was being "pumped," and, rising, suggested a further stroll.

They got to the next pool—the Firpark—when round a corner they espied the worthy Emmeline sitting at the feet of "Snochter" McTavish, one of Lord Peat's gillies. His brawny arms encircled her neck, and he gazed with hungry eyes on her charms, the while she tickled his brawny bare knee with a carl-doddy. The Elder's look froze to zero, and gripping Delia by the arm, he spun her round, and said: "The tae'll be ready, 'n' it'll spile if it draws ower long."

She had, however, taken in the rustic comedy, and it now occurred to her that Emmeline had certainly lost no time in the land o' kail 'n' parritch.

"Now, mind ye, we saw twa bonny fish i' the Sandy Haven, 'n' a muckle red brute

i' the Firpark. I'll be at the door at nine in the morning if ye'll order the mawtor car."

Peter departed to the wee "housie" at the end of the garden, and Delia to the "sittin' parlour" to drink a dish of tea.

VIII

A GOOD DAY'S FISHING

PUNCTUALLY at nine a.m. the car rolled up to the cottage door and Peter stowed away the dainty rods and other tackle.

They entered the car and were soon at the waterside. Peter unlocked the hut and left Delia to don her trouser waders.

He put up the longest rod he could find, but it seemed a toy to him after his own heavy twenty-foot Greenheart.

"A doot yer wand's" (rod) "mair fit tae kittle the hens in a barnyaird than fush," he said, a thought contemptuously.

"Of course, Peter, your great twenty-footer is *the* thing, but you must remember I've only a woman's arm."

"An' a bonny airm tae," said the Elder, handsomely making amends. "Noo pit on a twa-inch Mar Lodge flee an' syne intae them."

Delia knotted on the fly and entered the water.

“Dinna be fear’t tae wade deep, the boddam’s a’ shingle, an’ ye’ll no droon as lang’s Peter Tamson’s by ye.”

She waded until the water was well above her waist and then made her first cast, it wasn’t a bad one.

“No sae bad for a peginner,” said Peter.

At each cast she let out more line, until at last Peter exclaimed in whole-hearted admiration, “Dam’t, that’s capital, A wish auld McGollach cud see ye throw.”

Delia gave him the glad eye and winked at him twice.

Peter blushed and felt cold shivers down his back.

Presently the muckle red fish dashed at the fly, and as he did so Peter shouted : “Up wi’ the p’int o’ the rod, stick the butt i’ yer wame, ma’am.”

But the remark was unnecessary, for Delia had command of the fish in a moment, and the skirl of the reel was gladder music to Peter’s ears than the grandest pibroch on the pipes.

Down, down stream dashed the old cock fish until eighty yards were out, then up until Delia had recovered twenty yards of slack—then he sulked.

“The dour auld divil, A doot I’ll need tae put a stone ower him tae shift him.”

Seizing a stone the size of his fist Peter hurled it over the fish, which came up like a flash and executed a *pas seul* on the top of the water and jigged for a moment.

“Pe careful, ye nearly aye lose a fush that jigs like that !”

“All right, Peter; now I’m going to be really hard on him, for my tackle’s good and my arm’s tired.”

She gave the fish the butt so severely that in another minute he was coming alongside, belly up.

Peter knelt down, and poising like an eagle, gaffed the fish in a twinkling, and threw it far up on the shingle.

“A graun’ fush, if a wee thochtie red for the time o’ year, but he’ll mak’ a grand kipper, an’ there’s naebody i’ the glen can kipper a fush like my Janet.”

Delia came and sat down, delighted with her first capture in Scotch waters.

The Elder next extracted the fly from the fish's mouth, smoothed its ruffled feathers and spat on it for luck. He then unscrewed the top of the dainty flask from the luncheon basket, and pouring out a dram offered it to Delia.

"Thanks, Peter, but I'll have some water with it, please."

"It'll chill yer stomach, but A suppose yer heid's nae strong like mine."

After she had drunk the health of the fish Peter had his dram, and she asked his opinion of the whisky, which was the best money could buy.

"It's joost like a drink o' milk," said Peter, who smacked his lips in delight.

He then weighed the fish, which was a cock weighing $18\frac{1}{2}$ lb. "A real good peginning, an' ye'll get twa three yet mebbe."

They then tried the Telegraph Pool, which yielded a sea-trout only.

Successively the Ann Pool, Dalraddy, and the Douchels, which were blank.

At Dalraddy they lunched, and Peter gave Delia an account of the glen history which was at once amusing and instructive.

The afternoon was wearing on and she was getting tired—and if the truth be told, rather sleepy, for Glengollach air is a fine soporific to those unaccustomed to it.

“Noo ye’ll be some tired, an’ we’ll just finish at the Boat peel. It’s the best chance o’ the day, an’ when the sun’s jeest sinkin’ ower the Pap o’ Glengollach” (a noted mountain) “ye should hae a ticht line mebbe mair than ance.”

They rested by the pool for a little, and dreamed to the music of the river as it tumbled and brawled over the rocky bed. The light was dimming a little, and the hills were assuming that lovely purple hue, exquisite with their background of gold and pink and crimson purple sunset.

Not a fish broke the surface of the water, but Peter’s eagle eye was not to be denied.

“At this time o’ nicht dinna look for a muckle noisy rise, but jeest watch the

likely lies i' the peel, an' maybe ye'll see a black nose peeking up an' the p'int o' a tail gaein' doon, an' then up an' at him. Ye see that swirly boil at the back o' the blue rock there: weel, keep yer eye on that."

A second or two after, Peter gripped her arm. "Did ye see him?"

"Yes, Peter, a monster; what will I put on?"

"A yalla eagle's the thing wi' this licht, he's a bonny clean run yin that, an' no an unce under thirty punds."

The eagle was duly mounted and Delia began to cast, and it was easier here, for to their side the water ran deep to the edge and no wading was required. At the fourth cast the fly lit on the swirl and the fish rose over it head and tail, but just missed it.

"Noo come oot an' smoke wan o' yer paper thingies, and then try him again."

They smoked, and Peter discoursed on fishing.

"Never mak' the mistak' o' provokin' a fish by castin', castin' at him time an'

again if he misses. Gi'e him time, an' first try a smaaler flee o' the same pattern, and then if he doesna tak' it, change yer pattern at thegither."

He changed the fly to a lesser yellow eagle, and Delia began again.

Again the fish missed.

"Darn the thing, he's for't, but the current sweeps it awa' afore he has a chance tae get it; but ye cast again, an' whenever the flee lichts, slack oot twa yairds o' line tae compensate for the pull o' the watter on the flee."

Delia did so and the fish sucked it down. She struck and the reel shrieked "the de'il amang the tailors" as the fish bolted up stream like a flash.

"Mind that rock, dinna get yer line roond it or ye're deen."

It was a very devil-possessed fish; now up, now down, tearing across the surface, jugging, sulking, boring, and finally, with a magnificent rush, it ran itself ashore in the shingle at the other side, high and dry.

"Pull him back noo gently, but firmly."

But the fish had regained his strength when he reached the water, and was off down stream at a speed that would have put a fast torpedo boat to shame.

When all but a yard or two of line was off the reel he turned and bored slowly up stream, he was beginning to flag, and gently Delia raised him over to her side where Peter was ready, with the dying sun glinting on the steel of the gaff.

It was over, the fish was lying a bonny silvery bar among the bracken.

He was duly "kirsened," and as Delia was now aching all over from the strain of her long day, Peter packed him in the bag after weighing him.

"No a bad day, 18½ an' 31½'s good for a start; yer near as good a fisherman's masel."

"That is a pretty compliment, Peter, but there is the car."

As they glided home through birch and bracken and heather, the stillness broken only by the hoarse call of the grouse-cock

or the lament of the nightjar, both Delia and Peter were unconsciously thinking the same thought, that "Doubtless God could have made a better world, but doubtless God never did!"

IX

THE ELDER AND THE BAGMEN

ONE would have hardly thought it would be worth the time expended for commercial travellers to visit Glengollach. Peter Tamson's general shop was the largest emporium in the glen; he was a Tory of Tories in sticking to a brand he had once proved good: and the wiles of the smart, morning-coated, tall-hatted gentlemen from the nearest town—some fifty miles away—were lost on the dour if worthy Elder.

Dozens of these commercial Napoleons had met their Waterloo in Peter's shop; and if bidden by their overlords to return and try again, quaked in their shoes before the Lord High Chief Justice air of Peter Tamson. No third visit was ever recorded concerning any of these

“impident buddies,” as he called them with sniff contemptuous.

Many a time and oft had he been aghast at the awful temerity of some bagman “blade” who suggested that he should throw out a bow window and adorn it with lingerie and laces, ribbons and camisoles. “Oot of ma shop wi’ ye, ye spawn o’ the deevil!” was the reply which sent a varied succession of these gentlemen gasping into the village street to catch the first train for the south.

Peter was no hustler. He dressed his shop window but twice a year. At Christmas a weird collection of rather weary-looking toys was given the light of day on the top shelf of the window; various delicious comestibles, such as home-made haggis, “parliament” gingerbread cakes, Everton toffee—and I was once greatly astonished to see there six jujube fish of jelly-like consistency, strewn over with powdered sugar—sweetie loaf, etc.

The third shelf was devoted to Bibles, tracts, and various other publications of a highly moral nature; while the ground

floor, so to speak, of the window held a profusion of bootlaces, pens, pencils, slates, and other educational implements.

The only other occasion in each year when the window was gutted, washed out with soap and hot water and the glass polished like any mirror, was on the occasion of Janet's birthday. Then Peter really did break out, and the shelves were decorated with white heather; one whole shelf was devoted to little white cakes all beautifully iced—the "emblem of purity," said Peter—while a large round cake in the centre bore the inscription "To ma dearie." It lay in state there invariably for a week, when it was solemnly set forth on the round table in the "sittin'" parlour, wherein Peter's and Janet's more intimate friends gathered on the momentous birthday and partook of large chunks of it, washed down with "reel sherry wine." It had four white stucco angels at the corners, and the unmarried girls bidden to the feast had, amid much nudging and giggling, to draw lots for them. To be the proud possessor of one of Janet

Tamson's angels was a sure sign that the recipient would be a bride before the year was out, and Peter was almost inclined to think that, by special dispensation of Providence, it very often came true !

Some time back Messrs. Rake and Grab-bit had sent their head traveller to try and conquer the adamant Peter. But the gentleman in question came away with "a flea in his lug," begotten of the latter's acid tongue. In revenge, this miserable creature persuaded, for a mild bet, some few of the juniors from another firm to try their luck in Glengollach.

One day in June, while Peter was busily engaged in filing down a ragged tooth which, sharper than that of the proverbial serpent, was causing the Elder many a "dird," Tinny McTavish wheeled the station barrow to the shop-door, and taking down one of the boxes piled thereon, dragged it into the shop. He was followed by a dapper gentleman of some twenty-four summers, clad in the very latest "note" from town.

Peter, who was filing away in front of a

small mirror hung up behind the counter, pretended not to hear their entry, and took no notice.

“ Ahem ! ” crowed the commercial nut.

“ Aahem ! ” said Peter, his mouth full of rusty file.

“ Good morning, Mr. Thomson.”

“ Oh, A didna see ye,” said the Elder, with crushing sarcasm. “ Tinny, if ye stan’ there an’ cackle like a hen-wife ye’ll get a hot lug afore ye’re muckle aulder.” As he rebuked Tinny, the Elder regarded the bagman with that stony stare which had undone many of the same kin.

“ A presoom ye didna bring that muckle box here for the pleasure o’ saying ” (mincingly) “ ‘ Good morning, Mr. Tamson’ ? ”

“ Oh no; quite so; certainly not.”

“ Wud ye explain to me, me bein’ dull in the intellec’, hoo ‘ quite so, sairtainly not,’ cud be ‘ Oh no ! ’ at ane an’ the same time ? ”

“ Oh yes; that is, oh no; oh damn ! I might as well try to sell goods to the devil.”

As the bagman rushed down the village street he heard Peter's stentorian voice behind him—

“ A beleeve ye'll sell quicker tae the de'il than ye wull tae Peter Tamson, ye wee bit shargour.”

Turning to Tinny, he said, severely: “ Tak' yon crater's bit boxie tae the station, Tinny.”

“ Imphm,” replied Tinny.

The tooth at last filed to a comforting flatness, Peter went into the garden to see how his bedding-out plants were coming on.

The next candidate for Peter's custom was older and more to the manner born. He was a man of maturer age than the last one, and was quietly but neatly dressed. He had no samples, no appearance of the commercial about him save a heavy gold watch-chain and diamond ring; indeed, to the layman's eye he might be merely a potential customer. He little knew Peter Tamson.

“ Good morning, Mr. Thomson.”

“ A *fine* mornin’,” quoth Peter.

“I understand the soil here is sandy, Mr. Thomson.”

“Aye, and dry at that,” rather grimly.

“Now I wonder if you could tell me of the best potato to plant, for my little garden at home has a sandy soil, and I’ve not been very successful lately.”

“Come wi’ me, an’ I’ll show ye the graundest growing tattie in the warld.”

Leading the unsuspecting bagman through the shop to the garden, Peter opened an outhouse door and pointed to a large heap of potatoes. “That’s a tattie called the Factor, an’ there’s nae better value to be grawn.”

“Indeed, indeed; most interesting. I’ll take a note of the name and order some from——”

“Ye’ll get nae better or cheaper than them. I’ll do you twa hunderweight at 18s. 6d. a hunder” (7s. 6d. was the market price) “for cash doon, but ye must mak’ up yer mind, for I’m expectin’ a traveller body wi’ some thingies I want for the shop.” (Oh, Peter!)

“I’ll take a hundredweight and pay

now," said the traveller, producing a handful of silver and scenting an order.

Peter pocketed the 18s. 6d. and told Janet to run and tell Tinny McTavish to wheel the potatoes to the station after putting them in a sack.

"An' there'll be thruppence for the bag."

"Ah, Mr. Thomson, I see you're a good business man."

He paid Peter the threepence and proceeded to tell him that he represented Messrs. Soe-and-Soe, and would show him samples of anything he required.

"Weel, weel," said Peter, "a body's aye learnin' something. I'd never hae suspectit *you* o' being a traveller, A thocht ye waur a gentleman." (Oh, Peter, I doubt Auld Horny was at your elbow then!)

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the bagman uneasily; "but what can I show you?"

"Oh, I'm needin' some wincey petticoats and reed flannel drawers for the wives i' the glen."

The traveller was off to the station, and returned accompanied by Tinny and the

barrow with the usual complement of boxes. Quickly the counter was a sea of petticoats and red flannel drawers. Peter handled them with an air of a perfect *connoisseur*.

“Now that one you have in your hand is a splendid line. Only ten thousand of them left, dirt cheap at 5s. 6d. a-piece, but a considerable reduction by the hundred.”

“H’m, a thochtie licht in weight,” murmured Peter, “an’ terrible skimpit tae the breadth. Ye see the weemen hereabouts are auld-fashioned kind, an’ they’ll no wear ony o’ they strumpet narrow petticoats or drawers.”

“Oh, but, my dear sir,” remonstrated Mr. Traveller.

“A’m tellin’ ye,” said Peter, fixing his steely eye on the man.

“Well, this one is a good line,” handling another.

“No very even in the wool, na, na, badly loomed, badly loomed.”

“Oh, I assure you——”

“Ye may assure me till yer blin’; but ye’ll no convince me.”

The red flannel shared the same fate, and in less than twenty minutes the traveller was well on his way to the station, minus 3s. 6d. railway fare, 18s. 6d. for potatoes for a back garden which did not exist, 3d. for a sack, and 2s. 6d. to Tinny for his services !

“What’ll A do wi’ yer tatties ? ” said Tinny as they reached the station.

“Take yourself to the devil, and the potatoes with you,” was the uncompromising reply.

Half-an-hour later Tinny resold the potatoes to the Elder for half-a-crown, and proceeded to spend the rest of the day in unholy debauchery at the Glengollach Arms.

For a long time Peter remained unmolested, until one day there came an American, who, entering the shop, handed Peter his card across the counter. It bore this inscription—

MR. DIONYSIUS YARK,
MESSRS. SNUFFLE AND PONK,
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

Peter pulled himself together, donned his great horn-rimmed spectacles and read the card.

“ Traveller ? ”

“ Yep, I reckon so.”

“ A’m no needin’ onything at present.”

“ Guess you will, sir, when you see the goods.”

“ A some doot it,” grimly.

“ It’s up to me, anyhow.”

“ Aye, if yer keen on waste o’ breath, but I hear you Yankees need to let aff a lot o’ steam for fear o’ bustin’.”

“ Mr. Thomson, you’re great,” and seizing Peter’s hairy paw, exclaimed jovially, “ Guess we’ll do a deal—shake.”

Peter’s attitude was that of the hen who had reared ducklings and passed a pond with them for the first time. His reckoning was out. Here was a new animal in the human menagerie, a complete stranger to Glengollach, the first the Elder had met, and, truth to tell, he did not just know how to tackle him.

This astonishing person was dressed as quietly as a Plymouth brother; no gold

cable across the waistcoat, no diamond ring or curled moustache, no anything that one expected.

He was a nice, freshly complexioned man of about thirty-six, in a neat blue serge suit and black tie, no gloves, no button-hole, no "glad eye" for the girls in a shop—just an earnest, convincing manner and no frills.

Many of the travellers tried to patronise Peter, and he never allowed even Lord Peat, his landlord, to do that; but this curious person was neither patronising nor servile, he was straight.

"The situation's just this, sir," said the man, very quietly. "I'm out to sell my firm's goods. I'm going to tell you about them if you'll give me a few minutes, and if you like them you'll give a small order; if you don't—well, there are no bones broken; and perhaps another time you will."

"Yer honest, onyway," said Peter, who was already feeling weak about the backbone, and almost saw himself counting out good golden sovereigns from the stocking-

foot for things he had no earthly use for. He knew he was lost, and wisely thought that the sooner he got it over the less it would cost, as he might weaken further still.

"I've never met your kind afore," said Peter, a little bead or two of sweat appearing on his sun-tanned brow. The American just looked quietly into his eyes, and Peter faltered: "I'll gi'e ye a hunderweight o' tatties tae just leave yer boxies at the station an' no come back."

"I reckon that's a battle half won," said Mr. Yark. "But I'll not take advantage of you, Mr. Thomson. Let me just show you one or two lines, judge the quality for yourself, and then give me an order—or *not*, just as you please."

"Weel, weel," said Peter, "the sooner ower the better."

The American went to the door and whistled to Tinny, who was round the corner ready with the box-laden barrow to "charge" at the given signal.

"Yer gey an' cute," said the Elder, sardonically.

“ Maybe, Mr. Thomson, but I’ll prove to you I’m honest as well.”

The goods were shown, the stocking-foot was poorer by ten golden sovereigns, and all Peter said to himself as Tinny accompanied the Yankee to the station was: “ Wha’d hae believed A was sic a dam’ saftie?”

X

PETER TAMSON, SOLDIER OF THE KING

AT the outbreak of the European War Peter was fifty-five, but owing to the hardy life he had led in the open air of a Scotch glen he did not look a day over forty, save for a few grey hairs mingling with the shock of red hair which adorned his splendid head.

It was Sunday evening in Glengollach, and the Rev. John McGollach delivered a rousing sermon on the horrid atrocities of the world's enemy. His stentorian voice thrilled the kilted audience to their very marrow. "I ask every man of you to think of the innocent blood of women and children—spilt in wanton barbarity by a nation lost to every decency of humanity; and having thought, I ask every man of you here present who can bear arms to join the King's Army, and to avenge with

all the heat of your Highland blood those horrible crimes."

One could see the face of each man harden as the words were shouted, for the Rev. John felt in every fibre the acutest pain and indignation.

Peter and his wife Janet walked through the old grey churchyard to their cottage. One man who had addressed a remark to Peter in passing, but got no reply, whispered to his companion: "Peter's birse is up. He'll dae something yet, auld tho' he is; mark my words."

Peter strode silent by the side of Janet, and as he entered the cottage banged the door, a most unusual thing for him to do. He sat down and leaned his furrowed face upon his hands. He ate no supper, much to Janet's distress, but groaned repeatedly, and his eyes seemed strangely wild. After Janet had finished eating he said he was going to the muckle hoose to see Lord Peat, the owner of Glengollach.

He was ushered into the smoking-room, where Lord Peat happened to be alone reading.

“Hullo, Peter, what can I do for you?”

“I wis jeest wondering if ye’d let the fishin’ for the spring, my lord.”

“No, Peter, I haven’t so far, and with this horrible war still going on I fancy it won’t let.”

“Aye, it *is* a horrible war, a hellish war, but there’s jeest ae end till ’t.”

“You mean?”

“A mean that Almichty God will no permit ony end but one, and that is the blotting oot o’ a race siclike they are; but it’s no a pleasant thing to talk o’, yer lordship. That was a terrible amusin’ play the hoose pairty gave last week for the Refugees’ Fund, but it beats me hoo for a whilie I didna ken the ladies an’ gentleman that took pairt; noo Mr. Stirk is seventy if he’s a day, and he lookit twenty-five.”

“Oh, that’s easily explained, Peter. Clarkson, the wigmaker from London, came down and made them up; it’s quite simple.”

“Made up.” Peter pondered the words,

and then gave a horse-laugh. "Weel, weel, my lord, I'll just be going home."

"Good-night, Peter."

"Good-night, my lord."

Lord Peat thought Peter very odd in his demeanour, but knowing he was rather eccentric soon forgot the episode.

Janet had left his supper on the table, and was delighted to find Peter eat with zest. His simple meal over, he lit his pipe and said: "Noo, Janet, pay heed to me. I'm goin' tae London the morn, and I may no be back for a lang time. I feel in my bones I'll *come* back; but when, the good Lord alone kens."

Janet started up. "I nicht hae kent—I see it all noo. Yer gaun tae the war. Yer ower auld, Peter, but I'll no say ye nae if it's yer wull, and I'll keep the shoppie goin' till ye return, ma brave man. Ae, Peter, if A could but come wi' ye."

"Janet, yer a sensible woman; pit war oot o' yer heid till ye get a telegram frae me, and keep a ticht tongue in yer heid, lass."

Next morning it was all over Glengollach that the Elder had gone to London by the first train. Many were the visitors to Peter's shop that morning, and many pennies clinked into the little till ostensibly for tobacco, bulls-eyes and matches, but in reality as an excuse to pump Janet as to the reason of this sudden departure. Janet's invariable reply was, "The Elder's gaun tae London, but what for is neither your business nor mine."

Peter, on arriving in London, took a sober four-wheeler to an ancient hostelry kept by the son of an old Glengollach worthy. He had a good breakfast, and then asked the host to look up the name of one Clarkson, Wigmaker, and on getting his address took another four-wheeler to the great wigmaker's. Peter did not take the cab because he wished to spend money, but simply because of his ignorance of London, and thought it cheaper to do this than waste half the morning getting to his destination.

Arrived at Clarkson's, he asked to see the artist in wigs, and was told it was quite

impossible. "Ma birkie," he said, in an angry voice to the dapper assistant who barred the way, "I'll see Maister Clarkson if A wait a week."

Finding Peter obdurate, and quite oblivious of other claims on his master's time, the "birkie" showed him in.

"Good-morning, sir," said Peter.

"Good-morning, Mr.—"

"Peter Tamson o' Glengollach, at yer service, sir."

"Well, Mr. Tamson of Glengollach, what can I do for you?"

"Well, ye see, sir, I'm gaun tae the front, an' I'm some auld tae enlist unless ye can snod me up a bit. I'm fifty-five, an' when I leave you I *maun* be thirty-five."

Mr. Clarkson lay back in his chair and shook with laughter. "How did you think of coming to me to rejuvenate you?"

"Well, Lord Peat had a bit play-actin' at the muckle hoose in Glengollach a while back, and auld Mr. Stirk o' Drumsnochter took pairt in't; he's every day

o' seventy years, and ye made him twenty five, an' I thocht if ye'd dae the same by me I'd stand a chance o' a Veterans' Corps onyway."

In half-an-hour Peter Tamson left Clarkson's looking a young thirty-five. Another four-wheeler took him to the nearest recruiting office, and in less time than it takes to write he was a soldier of the King.

The Recruiting Officer remarked to his junior as Peter left: "I believe that old Highlander is much beyond the age; he'd a curious young-old look about him, but I should say he'd be a devil to fight, and that's the sort we want, eh?"

Weeks ran into months, and still Peter was absent.

One day Tinny McTavish rushed round the village waving a copy of *The Times* which Lord Peat had given him that morning. It recorded the fact that Sergeant Peter Tamson had been "awarded the Victoria Cross for conspicuous gallantry

in the field," and proceeded to relate how the brave Peter had carried a boyish subaltern who was badly wounded, off the field under heavy fire, and himself fell, shot through the ankle, as they were met by a party of Red Cross stretcher-bearers, who took both safely to the motor ambulance in waiting.

Janet cried her heart out, and then proceeded to pack her belongings. She shut the shop, which for a hundred years had never been shut on any day but a Wednesday afternoon or a Sunday, and went to London to see her man, who lay in a trim bed in a dainty ward of the London Hospital.

Peter was overcome when one bright day the Royal visitor came to his bedside and pinned the little cross with "For Valour" on it to the blue jacket of his hospital suit, and made kindly inquiry about his wounds.

"They got me wi' a bit shrapnel i' the leg, and noo the surgeon says I maun ha'e ma leg ta'en aff below the knee; an' there's

jeest ae thing I would beg, Sir, an' that is, if the Government gi'e me a timmer leg, it will be ane that's swack at the quheet."

This, being interpreted to the Royal visitor, meant that he wanted one with a movable foot and ankle-joint.

Two months later Glengollach was gay with bunting, and the band from Ballater was in attendance at the station. Lord Peat himself helped Peter out of the train into his own car, and the band struck up the strains of "See, the Conquering Hero Comes." A banquet followed at the Glengollach Arms, and Peter, proud as Lucifer, wearing his cross, sat next Janet, who was resplendent in a new gown and shawl, the gifts of a Gracious Lady who does not forget those whose men serve their King and country.

Tinny asked Peter, "Hoo mony o' the enemy did ye sheet?"

"Whisht, Tinny; it's no a thing to boast o', but A think A had a good baker's dozen onyway, lad."

Believe me, when Peter and Janet got home to their cottage there was not a dry eye in Glengollach, and the worthy pair squeezed hands like any yokel lovers of sixteen. It was a grand epoch in the history of Glengollach.

*An Illustrated Catalogue of all the books in
the "Country Life" Library will be sent
post free, on receipt of a card.*



W

YB 32532

